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Matches between assigned goal-types and both implicit and explicit motive dispositions predict goal self-concordance

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Abstract Some individuals feel strong conviction and interest in pursuing personal goals, and minimal pressure and compulsion (i.e., they feel more "self-concordant" in their goal pursuits). Sheldon and colleagues argue that this is because their goals well match their implicit personalities (Sheldon, Pers Soc Psychol Rev 18:349–365, 2014). We evaluated this claim in a new way by first measuring participants' implicit and explicit Need for Affiliation and Need for Achievement (using the Picture Story Exercise and the Personality Research Form), then randomly assigning them to list and pursue either Relationship or Competence goals during the semester, then measuring the rated self-concordance of the resultant goals. We tested four goal-type by motive-type interactions as predictors of rated self-concordance, finding good support for three of the interaction hypotheses and suggestive support for the fourth. It appears that the self-concordance measure indeed assesses "fit" between personal goals and both implicit and explicit motives.

Keywords Implicit motives · Explicit motives · Self-concordance · Matching hypothesis

Introduction

We all know people who seem fairly clueless about what to do with themselves—failing to recognize what they really want, and spinning their wheels chasing ill-fitting goals. Sometimes their close friends can see this, and indeed, this is one of the great benefits of having good friends, who can ask "Why do you say you want X? Look at this fact, this fact, and this fact—it seems what you really want is Y" (Wilson and Dunn 2004). The difficulty of knowing what to want seems universal, as evidenced by the prominence, in literature and film, of stories about peoples' struggles to find out who they are and what will make them happy (Sheldon 2014). This occurs not only among youths (via vision quests and initiation rites) but also among middle-aged adults (via career shifts and mid-life crises) and elderly adults (via generativity and ego-integrity strivings). Self-discovery is a life-long process (Erikson and Erikson 1998).

Formalizing these observations, the self-concordance model of personal goal pursuit asserts that people can sometimes select the "wrong" goals to pursue; that is, goals that do not express peoples' developmental potentials and will not lead them towards greater well-being (Sheldon and Elliot 1999; Sheldon and Houser-Marko 2001; Sheldon 2004, 2014). The model theorizes that this occurs when goals fail to represent or reflect important aspects of the striver's own personality, such as his or her temperament, talents, strengths, motives, interests, and growth impulses. Such non-concordance can limit peoples' ability to move themselves towards the greater thriving, flourishing, and well-being that is possible for them, if only their goals and behaviors were aligned with those potentials.

Research shows that self-concordant goal selection can be handicapped by a variety of factors, including the fact that influential authorities and peers may be insensitive or hostile to the goal-setter's current condition and potentials, failing to facilitate or even actively impeding those potentials (Abad and Sheldon 2008; Ryan et al. 1994); the fact

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that advertising and other media often promote superficial or deleterious values and goals, especially materialistic and image-based goals (Howell et al. 2011; Schmuck et al. 2000); the fact that goal-setting is partly a conscious, explicit ("system 2") process, whereas the motives and behavioral trends that goals attempt to represent may be non-conscious and implicit processes ("system 1;" Morewedge and Kahneman 2010; Schultheiss 2008); and the fact that even if people know what they want, they can be afraid to upset their own status quo and commit themselves to the difficult challenges that such growth impulses represent (Maslow 1943).

Most research in this area has measured self-concordance using the "perceived locus of causality" (PLOC; DeCharms 1968) construct, as employed by Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci and Ryan 1985, 2000). According to SDT, motivated behaviors vary in their degree of feeling internally caused versus feeling caused by forces outside of the self. All motivated behaviors can be located somewhere along a continuum of internalization ranging from external motivation ("I do it to get rewards/avoid punishment;" not at all internalized) to introjected motivation ("I do it to avoid guilt;" partially internalized) to identified motivation ("I do it because I believe and identify with it"; fully internalized) to intrinsic motivation ("I do it because it is enjoyable;" automatically internalized). Feelings of internal motivation have been shown to predict many different kinds of positive outcomes resulting from many different kinds of behaviors (studying, working, parenting, partnering, voting, etc.). Similarly, feeling internal motivation for one's own self-listed goals has been shown to predict many positive outcomes including enhanced goal attainment, improved well-being, greater psychological need-satisfaction, and better objective performance (see Sheldon 2014, for a review).

Why do researchers assume that peoples' endorsements of internalized reasons for their goals (e.g., "I believe in and enjoy it") index the "fit" between a person's self-stated goals and his or her broader personality system? The main reason involves the phenomenological fact that such goals are experienced as direct expressions of the self, rather than as initiatives coaxed or coerced by external forces (Deci and Ryan 2000). Self-concordant goals simply *feel* like they reflect one's deeper personality. Stated more technically, idiographic personal goals are a type of "self-theory," specifically concerning what people think they want (Emmons and McAdams 1991; Epstein 1973). A goal self-theory that is accurate with respect to a person's underlying personality processes and developmental trends is likely to come with feelings of being internally congruent, willingly undertaken, and interesting and engaging, because there is no conflict between the stated goal and underlying personality. In contrast, a goal that does not represent or reflect underlying personality is more likely to feel pressured and motivated by external considerations rather than by actual values and interests, because the person (in a sense) is acting counter to their own inclinations. When this happens, ambivalence and reluctance can result which are typically reflected in peoples' motivation ratings. The idea that internalized goal ratings index greater congruence of conscious goals with "deep" personality is bolstered by findings that individuals who have more internalized goals are higher in insight variables such as mindfulness, self-actualization, and private self-consciousness, and lower in variables suggesting low self-insight such as control orientation, materialism, and public self-consciousness (see Sheldon 2014).

Although the above reasoning is plausible, the assumption that the PLOC-based measure of goal motivation taps deep person/goal fit requires direct substantiation. Some research has begun to explore this issue by examining whether matching between personal goal content and the content of broader motive dispositions predicts I-PLOC ratings. Sheldon and Cooper (2008) asked a sample of 493 community adults to list both communal and agentic goals, and found that participants rated goals as more self-concordant when the goal-type (communal or agentic) matched their self-reported motive dispositions (needs for intimacy or need for achievement, as measured by the Scale for Social Issues; Bernstein et al. 1989). In other words, goal-type by motive disposition interactions were found in the prediction of rated self-concordance for both intimacy motive/communion goal and achievement motive/agency goal combinations, supporting the idea that the self-concordance measure addresses person-goal fit or matching. Extending these correlational findings, Sheldon and Schüler (2011) conducted an experiment in which participants were randomly assigned to pursue either relationship or academic goals over the upcoming semester. They found two significant interactions such that participants who happened to be assigned to motive-consistent goals (be they relationship or achievement) rated their goals as higher in self-concordance. Self-concordance, in turn, predicted better longitudinal goal attainment and thus greater gains in well-being.

A major limitation of the Sheldon and Cooper (2008) and the Sheldon and Schüler (2011) studies, however, is that these studies only used explicit (or self-report) measures of motive dispositions (see also Job et al. 2009, for a similar procedure). However, many proponents of the motive disposition approach insist that motives can only be properly assessed by implicit methodologies, that is, methodologies in which participants project their non-conscious motives into stories told about ambiguous pictures or situations (Schultheiss 2008). In fact, this was a key assumption of early motive disposition researchers

(McClelland 1985; McClelland and Winter 1969; Murray 1938), who postulated that motive dispositions are learned behavioral orientations to approach certain classes of incentives, orientations which exist independently of what a person may believe about him- or herself. McClelland et al. (1989) formalized this distinction by highlighting the different roots and effects of implicit versus explicit motives (see also Spangler 1992). Thus, here we thought it important to try to replicate the Sheldon and Cooper (2008) and Sheldon and Schüler (2011) motive-goal matching to I-PLOC findings using implicit as well as explicit motive disposition measures.

In the current research we hypothesized that rated self-concordance, as assessed by the PLOC methodology, would be predicted by the interaction between people's motive dispositions (Needs for Affiliation and Achievement, measured by both implicit and explicit means), and the type of goal they have been randomly assigned to pursue (Relationship or Competence goals). Specifically, we expected to find Relationship goal × Implicit nAff, Relationship goal × Explicit nAff, Competence goal × Implicit nAch, and Competence goal × Explicit nAch interactions in predicting rated self-concordance, such that when participants are assigned to pursue goals in a domain that matches their disposition, they feel more interested and engaged and less pressured and forced. Thus, although measures of implicit and explicit motives are not expected to correlate with each other, we still expected matching of explicit goals with either type of motive measure to produce greater I-PLOC, supporting our assumption that I-PLOC indexes general congruence between goals and background personality.

Methods

Participants and procedure

Participants were 103 members of a social psychology class at the University of Missouri, 44 men and 53 women reporting, and 94 % Caucasian, who took part in the "personal goals" study for extra course credit and whose data were scored for implicit motives. A full classroom period was devoted to the first assessment, which started with an open-ended writing segment, moved to a semester goal-setting segment, and finished with a Likert questionnaire segment. For the goal-setting segment, participants were randomly assigned to list three semester goals in a particular content domain: improving relationships, boosting achievement/competence, or changing life-circumstances (the latter was construed as a neutral control condition, as explained below). 6 weeks and 12 weeks later, participants rated further questions about their semester goals during additional in-class assessments.

Measures

Picture story exercise

The picture story writing exercise was presented to the classroom following established guidelines for best practices (Schultheiss and Pang 2007). These guidelines include a script for presentation of the activity that emphasizes points such as that the story is to be imaginative, that it should have a beginning, middle, and end, and that the participants should consider including the thoughts, feelings and desires of the characters. Images were presented for 10 s on a projector screen, after which participants had 4 min to write an imaginative story. The six pictures used were: couple by river, nightclub scene, women in laboratory, ship captain, trapeze artists, and boxer. Stories were written by hand, and later transferred to word processing documents. Stories were coded for the Need for Affiliation and the Need for Achievement by two coders who were trained using Winter's (1994) *Manual for Scoring Motive Imagery in Running Text*, with training materials produced by an expert coder. Coders organized their coding by story type rather than by participant to avoid potential halo-effects by which the motive content of one of a participant's stories influences the coding of subsequent stories. Coders met weekly to discuss any discrepancies in their coding. The inter-rater reliabilities for pre-discussion coding ranged from high to acceptable (intra-class correlation coefficients: 0.86 for Need for Affiliation and 0.68 for Need for Achievement). Notably, we also coded participants' stories for the Need for Power (nPow), the third primary motive often focused on by motive disposition researchers; however, we do not present this data herein, (a) because we were only interested in affiliation and achievement motives (as were Sheldon and Cooper 2008, and Sheldon and Schüler 2011), (b) because we had no power goal experimental condition and no measure of the explicit power motive, and (c) because no significant effects emerged involving implicit nPow. For the reader's information, none of the four motive measures had skew or kurtosis greater than 1.1, although even if greater values had been observed, it would not be concerning because normality of predictors is not assumed by linear regression. Also, we did not observe any extreme outliers in terms of distance to the next closest observation or in terms of distance from distribution central tendencies. Finally, there was no evidence that any observations in the tails arose from errors in coding or calculation. Thus we observed the "safe rule" of maintaining all observations (Kutner et al. 2004).

Personality research form

The questionnaire segment of the assessment contained the need for achievement and need for affiliation scales of the

Personality Research Form (PRF; Jackson 1984). Each scale consists of 16 statements (8 reversed) to which participants reply "true" or "false." After recoding the reverse-worded items, we summed the number of "true" responses to each type of item to create PRF Need for Achievement (Kuder–Richardson alpha = 0.84) and PRF Need for Affiliation (Kuder–Richardson alpha = 0.88) scores.

Personal goals

Participants read: "We ask you to list three personal goals you will be pursuing over the semester. We will be asking you about these goals several times during the semester." They then read "before you list your three goals, there is one thing to keep in mind: We'd like you to list a particular type of goal—(BLANK). Research indicates that college students do not focus enough energy in this domain, so we would like to really get you working on this issue." Via random assignment, the blank was filled by either "concerning relationships and relatedness," defined as "feeling connected or deepening ties in important relationships such as romantic partner, friends, or family;" by "concerning achievement and competence," defined as "being competent or doing well in important areas of life such as sports, health, or academics;" or by "concerning changing your circumstances and situation," defined as "'facts about one's life, such as living arrangement, monetary situation, appearance, or course-load." The latter was chosen as a neutral control condition because previous research has shown that circumstance change goals are plausible to participants, but are relatively inert, psychologically (Sheldon and Lyubomirsky 2007, 2009). Relevant examples of each type of goal were provided. Example circumstance change goals included "Ask my parents to boost my monthly stipend," "Get a new apartment or roommate," and "change my look or hairstyle;" example relationship goals included "Make some new friends," "take my relationship with X to the next level," and "Better express my love to my parents;" and example competence goals included "Get a 3.5 GPA this semester," "Run a 6 min mile this semester," and "Help my rec team win the championship." Each participant wrote down three goals of the type requested into the blank spaces provided. There were 41 participants in the circumstances goals condition, 25 in the competence goals condition, and 37 in the relationship goals condition (the cell imbalance occurred because of an error in the distribution of goal-surveys).

Afterwards we assessed (PLOC) for the three goals listed by the participant. Participants read "Past research suggests that people may be motivated to do something for many different reasons. In this task, we would like you to rate each of your three goals in terms of each of the following four reasons." The four reasons were external (*because somebody else wants you to, or because the situation seems to compel it)*, introjected (*because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you didn't*), identified *(because you really believe that it's an important goal to have)*, and intrinsic (*because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you*). Items were rated from 1 (not at all for this reason) to 5 (very much for this reason). An aggregate goal self-concordance score was computed across the three goals by first reversing the external and introjected items and then averaging all items. Coefficient alpha was 0.74 for this 12 item composite. For further discussion of this measure, and consideration of how it assesses something more than mere conscious commitment to the goal, see Sheldon (2014).

6 weeks and 12 weeks later, in additional in-class questionnaires, participants were reminded of their three goals and again completed the PLOC measure in the course of an additional in-class questionnaire. Specifically, they were asked to "rate your current motivation for each of your three goals in terms of each of the following four reasons," and were then provided with the same four statements and rating scale described above. The three self-concordance scores were somewhat stable across the semester, correlating 0.52, 0.47, and 0.44 with each other. To ensure that motive-to-self-concordance effects were not unduly influenced by shared momentary state variance at Time 1, we averaged the three scores into a single self-concordance measure. For the reader's information, results were largely the same when any particular time period was examined, although the patterns were somewhat weaker due to the dis-aggregation.

Results

Preliminary results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations among the study measures. Implicit and explicit measures of the same motive (i.e., PSE nAchievement and PRF nAchievement) were uncorrelated with each other, echoing typical findings concerning the independence of implicit and explicit motive measures (Rawolle et al. 2013). Also, scores for different motives derived from the same method (i.e., PRF nAffiliation and PRF nAchievement) were not associated with one another. Further, there was no significant effect of goal condition assignment on any of the four motive disposition measures, indicating successful random assignment.

Primary hypothesis testing

To test our four interaction hypotheses we used a three step regression analysis predicting the goal self-concordance

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations among measured variables

	Mean	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7
Word count	430.50	115.03	−0.09	0.04	0.30	0.21	0.01	0.08
Relate goal condition	0.40	0.49		−0.46	−0.16	−0.14	0.11	−0.08
Comp goal condition	0.24	0.43			−0.08	0.18	−0.09	−0.01
PSE nAff	3.50	2.25				0.19	−0.03	0.15
PSE nAch	2.00	1.58					0.03	0.01
PRF nAff	2.66	3.50						0.04
PRF nAch	2.08	3.58						

$N = 103$

measure. Assigned goal condition was entered at Step 1, represented by two dummy variables in which the competence goal and relatedness goal conditions were coded either 0 or 1, and the circumstance goal condition was always coded 0 (making circumstance goals the comparison condition). The four (centered) motive disposition scores were entered at Step 2. At Step 2 we also entered each participants' overall word count for the PSE stories they wrote, because motive scores are typically correlated with the total number of words written (Schultheiss and Pang 2007), and because word count and implicit motive scores were significantly correlated in this data as well. At Step 3 we entered four product interaction terms, which were computed by multiplying the four motive disposition scores by the corresponding dummy variable (PRF nAch × competence goals; PSE nAch × competence goals; PRF nAff × relatedness goals; and PSE nAff × relatedness goals). We conducted the tests in a single model because we wanted to examine the unique effects of each interaction term, beyond any shared variance with other variables.

Table 2 presents the coefficients which resulted from the analysis. At Step 1 participants in the relatedness goal condition evidenced marginally higher self-concordance for the goals, and at Step 2, participants higher in PSE nAffiliation evidenced significantly higher self-concordance. Relevant to hypotheses, the interaction terms added significantly to model prediction, and at Step 3 both of the interactions involving

Table 2 Regression coefficients for the main model predicting goal self-concordance

Predictor	β	b	*SE*	95 % confidence limits		*t*	*p*	r_p^2
Step 1								
Relate goal condition	0.21	0.80	0.42	−0.04	1.64	1.88	0.063	0.03
Comp goal condition	0.05	0.23	0.48	−0.73	1.19	0.47	0.641	0.00
Step 2								
Relate goal condition	0.27	1.03	0.43	0.18	1.87	2.40	0.018	0.04
Comp goal condition	0.12	0.53	0.49	−0.44	1.50	1.09	0.279	0.00
Word count	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.71	0.481	0.01
PSE nAffiliation	0.27	0.23	0.09	0.05	0.40	2.56	0.012	0.06
PSE nAchievement	−0.06	−0.07	0.12	−0.31	0.17	−0.59	0.558	0.00
PRF nAffiliation	0.14	0.07	0.05	−0.03	0.18	1.40	0.165	0.02
PRF nAchievement	−0.01	−0.01	0.05	−0.11	0.09	−0.14	0.893	0.00
Step 3								
Relate goal condition	0.25	0.96	0.39	0.19	1.73	2.46	0.016	0.04
Comp goal condition	0.03	0.15	0.45	−0.74	1.04	0.33	0.740	0.00
Word count	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	1.52	0.132	0.01
PSE nAffiliation	0.06	0.05	0.09	−0.14	0.24	0.54	0.588	0.06
PSE nAchievement	−0.18	−0.21	0.13	−0.47	0.05	−1.63	0.106	0.00
PRF nAffiliation	−0.17	−0.09	0.06	−0.21	0.03	−1.52	0.131	0.02
PRF nAchievement	−0.02	−0.01	0.05	−0.12	0.09	−0.20	0.845	0.00
Relate goal condition × PSE nAffiliation	0.29	0.48	0.17	0.13	0.82	2.76	0.007	0.08
Comp goal condition × PSE nAchievement	0.18	0.40	0.24	−0.07	0.87	1.70	0.092	0.03
Relate goal condition × PRF nAffiliation	0.42	0.37	0.10	0.17	0.57	3.64	0.000	0.13
Comp goal condition × PRF nAchievement	0.06	0.07	0.11	−0.15	0.28	0.59	0.554	0.00

Final model $R^2 = 0.32$

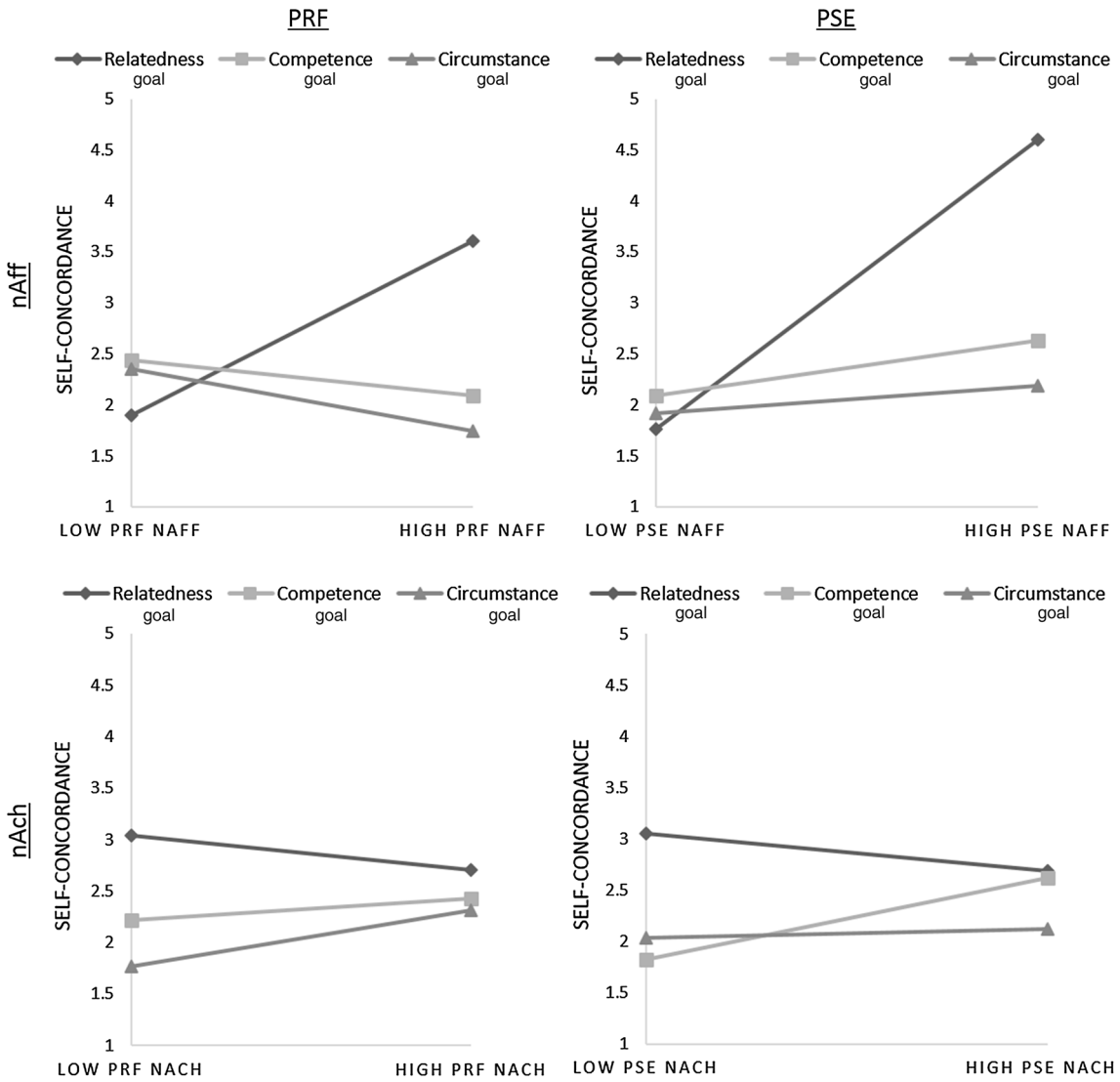

Fig. 1 Predicting self-concordance scores from goal condition and PSE and PRF motive disposition scores (graphed at +1/−1 standard deviations)

nAffiliation were positive and significant (see Fig. 1) and the PSE nAchievement × Competence goal condition interaction was positive and marginally significant. The PRF nAchievement × Competence goal condition interaction was positive but did not approach significance. Readers may also be interested to know that there were no significant interactions between goal-type and non-matching motive scores; i.e., participants high in PSE nAffiliation had no higher or lower self-concordance scores if they were assigned to pursue Competence goals.

We then conducted a more focused analysis directly comparing the competence and relatedness goals conditions to each other, omitting the circumstances goal condition (N = 62). In this analysis three of the interaction coefficients were positive and significant at $p < 0.05$, and the Competence goal condition × PRF nAchievement interaction approached significance ($\beta = 0.20$, $p = 0.139$). This provides some evidence that this fourth interaction may not be negligible; reasons why the interactions involving the achievement motive measures were generally weaker will be considered in the discussion.

Discussion

We tested the hypothesis that the fit (or match) between participant's motives, assessed both implicitly and explicitly, and the type of goals they have been assigned to list and pursue, would predict their rated self-concordance for those goals. We found that self-concordance was clearly higher when assigned goals matched participants' affiliation motives, measured by both implicit and explicit means.

There was also evidence that rated self-concordance is higher when assigned goals match achievement motives measured by implicit means. Finally, there was some indication that matches between assigned goals and explicit achievement motives increase self-concordance.

These results conceptually replicate past research demonstrating that motive-goal matches predict greater felt self-concordance for those goals (Sheldon and Cooper 2008; Sheldon and Schüler 2011). They also extend this research by assessing implicit motives via projective techniques, as well as assessing explicit motives via self-report techniques. Finding support for our hypotheses for both implicit achievement and implicit affiliation motives bolsters a central claim of the self-concordance model, that I-PLOC ratings for goals index the fit between the conscious goals that people have selected and other important aspects of their personalities, including those aspects that may not be revealed by self-report methods (Sheldon, in press). The current findings also support the notion that people can in some way sense how well their goals suit them, which may be a reflection of an organismic valuing process (Rogers 1964; Sheldon et al. 2003). Answering the question "why are you pursuing this goal?", we suggest, provides people an opportunity to attend to the outputs of such a process and to express whatever lurking ambivalence or reluctance they may feel.

Why were the interactions involving nAch, especially the explicit measure of nAch, weaker than those involving nAff? One possibility is that the self-concordance model simply does not apply as well within the domain of explicit achievement motivation. However, the fact that the goal-type by explicit achievement motive interaction has been found in other studies (Sheldon and Cooper 2008; Sheldon and Schüler 2011) works against this explanation. We speculate that conducting the initial assessment within a classroom setting can skew the assessment of the need for achievement, as students have academic self-presentational concerns on their minds especially at the start of an academic year, or may simply be using the setting to infer their explicit achievement motivation. In other words, this may be a "strong situation" in the Lewinian sense, which tends to overwhelm or negate individual differences. If the current assessment had instead been conducted at a meeting of a social club or event, results for the need for affiliation may have been different or weakened. Further research will be needed to explore this possibility. It is also noteworthy that we treated nAch and nAff as parallel or equivalent motive systems upon which to test our broader hypothesis, but this may not be a valid assumption. More research is required to distinguish the unique features or characteristics of the two types of motives.

Future research is also needed to integrate some previous findings with the present study's results. Thrash and Elliot (2002) and Hofer et al. (2010) showed that individuals high in trait self-determination (assessed by the Self-determination Scale, Sheldon and Deci 1993/1996) showed higher congruence between the implicit achievement motive (measured using picture story exercise procedures) and the explicit achievement motive (PRF, goal questionnaire and value questionnaire, respectively). It would be interesting to integrate these results with the present findings and test whether self-determination leads to implicit motive—explicit motive congruence, which in turn facilitates future self-concordant goal setting. Therewith the antecedents and consequences of motive-congruence could be analyzed simultaneously.

Limitations

This was a single study with only a modest N, and only three of the four predicted interactions found good support—although we might also say that finding three out of four predicted interaction effects, despite the modest N, is impressive. A second limitation is that the inter-coder reliability for the PSE nAch variable (of 0.68) was somewhat lower than is typical in the MDT literature, a fact which may have somewhat reduced associations involving this variable. Another limitation involves the necessity of randomly assigning participants to pursue particular types of goals, which may create an artificial situation that threatens the validity of the results—although we might also say that life is constantly assigning people tasks, which they take up with more or less alacrity depending on task-fit. Another study weakness is that the study participants were relatively homogeneous with respect to both age and ethnicity, meaning that our results need to be replicated with other populations and in other cultures. It would also be desirable to replicate the current study's results using a more modern measure of explicit motives, such as the PSE-Q (Schultheiss et al. 2009), which was designed from the start as a measure of self-reported motive dispositions. Finally, it would be desirable to test other measures of self-concordance beyond the I-PLOC measures employed herein, including other-report. As suggested in the first paragraph of this article, a person's friends may be able to tell if a particular goal is likely to be concordant for that person, even better than the person can. It may also be possible to assess self-concordance via implicit reaction time or response conflict measures instead of by I-PLOC measures. These important research questions also await scrutiny.

Conclusion

Since time immemorial human beings have struggled with the question of what to do with themselves—what current

behavioral options to select, in order to maximize their future happiness and equanimity. People also sometimes struggle with the goals and motivations imposed upon them by the environment. The current results suggest that people have the ability to tell if imposed goals match their implicit and explicit motive dispositions, via the PLOC ratings that they make. Thus, properly applied and interpreted, the self-concordance methodology may provide an excellent tool for growth-seekers hoping to evaluate the suitability of various possible goals they are considering pursuing.

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